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A MORNING IN MAY



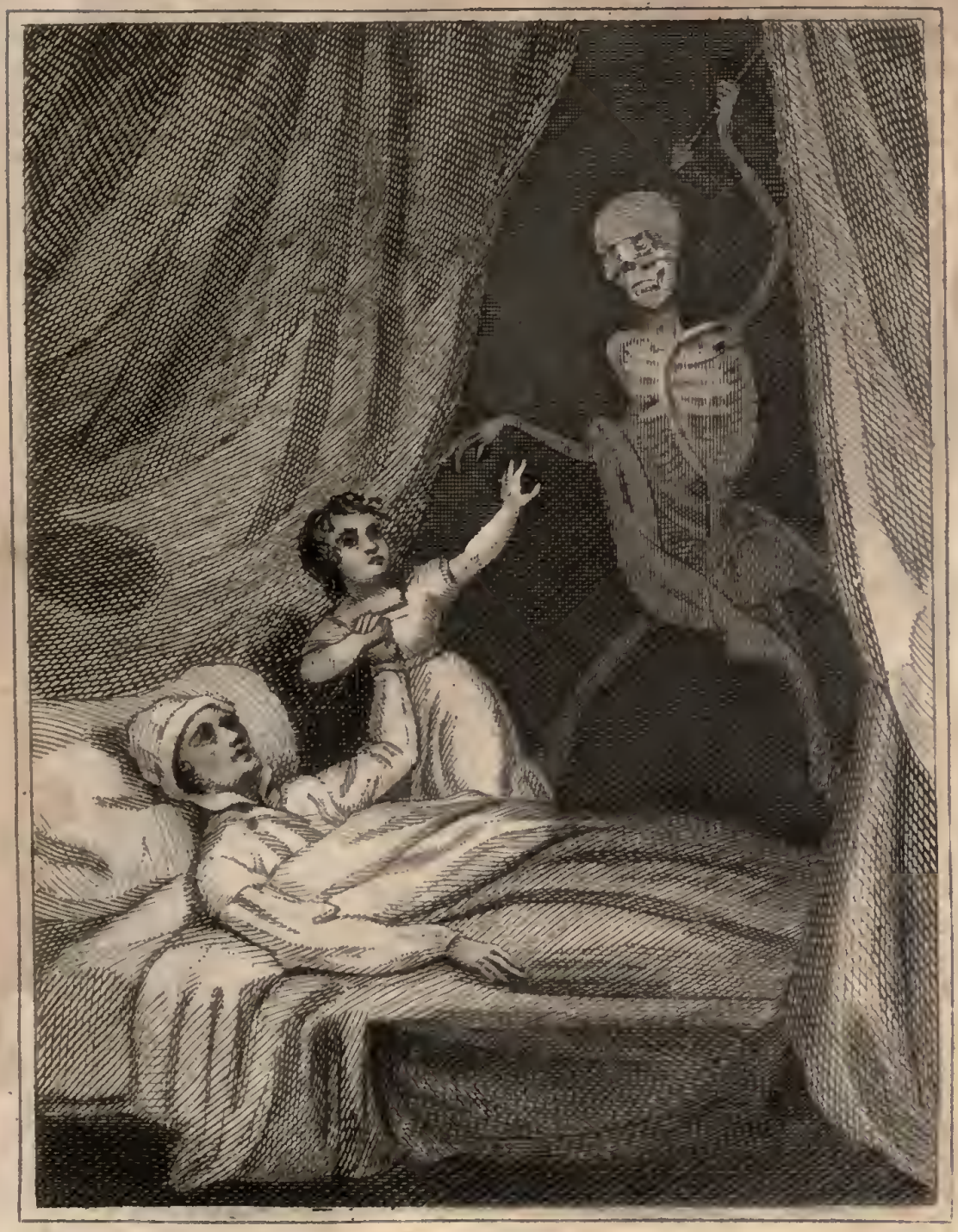
Then shall I not delight evince,
While treading nature's sod,
And gratefully adore, and own,
The works are thine—oh, God!

ON TIME



Improve your time—'tis short, 'tis flying.
Improve your time, for you are dying;
The only time that you can boast,
Is just the moment, at the most.

THE DEATH OF A FATHER



Does thy weaken'd fabric tremble—
Will the grave my parent hide?
Oh! the stroke—I cannot bear it.
Must I lose my tenderest guide.



Then youth, in health, your time improve,
Think not to banquet in the grove
Of unimpair'd and growing health,
For sickneſs marches on by stealth.

I am a cripple, as you see,
My leg it mortified:
It was cut off—could say no more,
Sobs choak'd her as she sigh'd.

The sisters left her and went on,
Grew careless of their flowers;
Then Mary said, we'll see again
That girl—Oh, gracious powers!

Poor cripple—oh, thy fate is hard,
I can't forget thy sigh;
Lord, look upon that crippl'd child,
In mercy from on high.

Thoughtful—grateful—home they went,
But Sarah quite asham'd,
Because she took one cake—she begg'd
It never might be nam'd.

Mary, the generous Mary, sigh'd,
And feelingly replied,
I never in my life have felt
More sweetly satisfied.

How thankful, sister, we should be,
We have our limbs and food;
Our father and our mother lives,
And we have every good.

Oh! gracious heaven, hear my pray'r,
Thy blessings shed abroad;
I'm thankful the poor crippl'd girl
Was trav'ling in our road.

19.—HEALTH AND SICKNESS.

Blest be that God who gives me health,
Of greater value than the wealth
Of India's rich and fertile shore;
I prize my health, tho' I am poor.
Health has its ever-flowing charms,
And happy they who in its arms
The chequer'd paths of life glide o'er,
And pass in health from shore to shore.

Health is the gift of a kind God,
And sickness his correcting rod;
Afflictions are the seeds of death,
The innate seed that points to earth.
See, when afflictions seize our frames,
And fevers kindle up their flames; [thirst,
When rack'd with pains, and parch'd with
Life's bitter streams to us seem curs'd.

Our tabernacle of frail clay
Views the cold grave, and faints away;
Revives, and clings to slender hope,
And sighs for health—oh, feeble prop.
Health with her rosy flow'ry train,
Add torture to our torturing pain;
'Tis then we cast a wishful eye
On health—but she her charms deny.
We beckon her—our beckon's vain,
She mocks, and then retreats again;
And leaves the gnaw-worm sickness still,
To use her saw-tooth'd sword at will.
The fabric trembles—hope recedes,
Death's minions on the carcase feeds;
Insatiate is the leach of pain,
It racks each nerve, it drys each vein.
The started, chill'd, dewy sweat,
Its icy drops each other greet;
The worn-out frame, with fleshless bones,
Vents sad soliloquies of groans.

The shrivell'd skin—the sunken eye,
Medicine and hope alike defy;
The victim's seiz'd—the dart will plunge,
And death awaits his threaten'd lunge.
Important moment!—what, no gleam
Of intervening hope between?
Stay, ask the victim, let him say
If every hope has fled away?

There is a hope beyond the grave,
A hand that can in sickness save;
That can support—surmount each pain,
And make alive the sicken'd slain.
Hold out this hope—he feels the rod,
The Christian's hope—is Jesu's blood.

What softens down the thorny bed,
When health's fair hope has gone and fled?
What cheers the spirits and the mind,
And where, in sickness, can we find
A firm support, unfailing stay,
When earthly hope has fled away?

'Tis Christ—for he, the Christian's hope,
Will prop th' afflicted sinner up;
Will teach the language of the heart,
While nature sickens at the dart:
To be—"Thy will be done, oh, God!"
I yield—I faint, but kiss the rod.

Then youth, in health, your time improve,
Think not to banquet in the grove
Of unimpair'd and growing health,
For sickness marches on by stealth:
Her step is sudden, quick her bound,
Darts on her victim as it's found;—
A midnight's silence mark'd approach,
Lighted alone with fever's torch.

Watch well your gate, in health prepare,
Your foes, tho' hardy, you may dare;
Make Christ your friend, he'll kindly save,
For he did consecrate the grave;
You may, in health or sickness, sing
All praise to your all-conq'ring King.

20.—ON TIME.

SIGNIFICANT; but what a span,
Short space allow'd to creature man;
Men, like a bubble, full of air,
Rise up—look round—and disappear.

Swift flies, oh! Time, thy rapid wings
As swiftly moves—as swiftly brings
Thy changes on the earth's great stage,
Where trifles foolish men engage.
Infatuation seize their brain,
With all its follies in its train;
Forgets for why they're born—and whence
They go—when Time will bear them hence.

How dang'rous to postpone—delay,
Put off life's work from day to day;
The end for which our time is giv'n,
Is to prepare for life in heav'n.

Children should early learn for why
They live, and that they soon must die;
Time's the preparatory state,
We die—then meet our endless fate.
Improve your time—'tis short, 'tis flying,
Improve your time, for you are dying;
The only time that you can boast,
Is just the moment, at the most.

When we look at Time in all its bearings, with reference to ourselves, its short duration, its fleetness, its uncertainty, and its connection with eternity, it is then, and then only, when its true importance and value appears. How much time can the youngest, the most healthy and vigorous, boast of?—only the present moment! By what tenure do we hold it?—by the breath in our nostrils: and the breath in our nostrils is the simple and only partition betwixt us and eternity. When we challenge ourselves as to its past improvement, what can we answer?—We are compelled to acknowledge, that we have been guilty of foolish and extravagant waste of that which we never can recal.

21.—A MORNING IN MAY.

Sweet, sweet's the breeze, the genial dews,
Of heart-reviving May;
My soul could stay with raptures here,
And meditate all day.

Sweet is the song of yonder thrush,
Hark! at its playful note;
Its melodies, what varied sound,
While warbling through its throat.

See, yonder careful mother-sheep,
And little frisking lamb;
Yielding to instinct obedience,
It rallies round its dam.

The oxen their delight display,
Their eager mouthsful take;
Content to eat their owner's grass,
Nor would his field forsake.

All nature clad in gay attire,
Appears in every view;
And if my eyes still wander round,
The scene is pleasing new.

Then shall I not delight evince,
While treading nature's sod,
And gratefully adore, and own,
The works are thine—oh, God!

SPRING is allowed to be the most pleasing season of the year, and they who have the advantages of rural life, and know how to estimate those advantages they possess, can enjoy it with

the soaring lark, who joyfully mounts aloft, and hails the day and the return of Spring. In Winter, Nature appears entirely divested of beauty, the cattle are sorrowful and gloomy, and the harmonious inhabitants of the grove hide themselves in silent seclusion: in short, Nature's whole family are wrapt in the mantle of torpor and apparent insensibility; but let the reviving rays of the sun, in Spring, shed their enlivening influences, —let the charming month of May advance, then we see nature shaking herself from her recent chains of torpitude, beams forth with renewed energies:—the trees are again clad with their beautiful foliage;—the flowers bud, open, and expand; and the morning's genial breeze is perfumed with the fragrant odours emitted from the infinite variety of plants, flowers, and scented shrubs;—the feathered songsters vie with each other in their melodies;—the cattle forget not the vigour which animates them, but mingle their tributary expression of feeling delight. How pleasing—how healthy, it is for youth, whose circumstances in life admit a range through the fields in the morning, as soon as the great lamp

of heaven has arisen above our horizon, and gilded the East with charms and inexpressible beauty, to see the countless dew-drops, like pearls, suspended from every green leaf—to inhale the sweet and perfumed air. What incitements do the month of May present to early rising, and they who indulge themselves with unnecessary hours of slumber in bed, deprive themselves of one of the greatest pleasures of life;—a pleasure calculated to benefit both the body and mind. Who can breathe the pure air of spring?—who can survey a tree in leaf, or in blossom?—who can view the flowery and verdant mead, or the rising majesty of the new clad forest, without feeling lively sentiments of gratitude to that Being, who cried, Come forth. All nature, clad in beauty and verdure, presents an assemblage of monuments to the astonished eye, that proclaim, with joyful voice, the power, the wisdom, and goodness of their Creator. Where is the heart that does not expand at the survey, and, palpitating with renewed energy, silently adores the great first cause of all?—Where is the heart, insensible to pleasures so refined,

unfeeling as adamant, refuses to taste, nay, feast, upon the superlative dainties provided? "Oh, ye rising youth, shake off your habits of indolence, inactivity, and insensibility! The sweet month of May claims your attention; she invites you to participate the pleasures felt by all creation. Awake to your true interests; let not spring leave you as it found you, the same ungrateful, uninformed, and contracted creatures, but aspire to know much, and when your knowledge is of the right kind, it will lead you into the paths of humility; for it is a consequent result of contemplation of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, as manifested in his works, will tend to lessen yourself in your own esteem, and constrain you to cry out, "*Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou visitest him!*"

22.—THE DEATH OF A FATHER.

Oh, fatal stroke!—must hope expire,
And shall my tender parent die?
The ghastly monarch, with charg'd quiver,
Points his poniard—mocks my cry.

Father, does his arrows pierce thee?
Reclines thy heart against its wall;
Faint and trembling art thou sinking,
Tastes thy lips the bitter'd gall?

Does thy weaken'd fabric tremble—
Will the grave my parent hide?
Oh! the stroke—I cannot bear it,
Must I lose my tenderest guide.

Father! tell me, art thou dying?
Lingers yet thy quivering breath:
Is the foe the conquest gaining,
Must thou yield to conq'ring death?

Thy eye-balls sinking in their sockets,
Closing, shut to ope' no more:
Thy spirit quits its falling temple,
Quits to seek another shore.

This hour robs me of my father,
New-born troubles rise to birth:
Fatherless, and unprotected,
Cold he sinks to mother earth.

Floods of tears, could you relieve me,
Surely I'd relief obtain;
But, oh! my breaking heart assures me,
You can't assuage—tears flow in vain.

Chill'd is my prospect—let me linger
Let me wash thy sacred bier
With those tears I would deposit
In the grave with thee, dear sire.

Greedy grave—respite thy victim,
Suspend thy yawnings while I weep;
Take thy little infant mourner,
Let me with my father sleep.

Oh, the sexton's delving weapon
Shows no pity to a child;
Thy steel is polish'd with the ashes
Of death's victims—Oh, I'm wild!

O, how cruel!—death has seiz'd him,
And the grave's cold bosom yawns
To receive her cold deposit,
Chills my hopes, and sinks as dawns.

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